

## Recommendations for 2003-2005

1. Establish a Committee on Access to Critical Health Services to guide use of *The Standards for Public Health* on access.

Public health leaders and their partners will benefit from having a sustained forum on access, focusing on the public health role in understanding a community's capacity to meet health service needs. So much attention has been framed from the perspective of health insurance coverage that basic information is often lacking on such issues as who has access to what services, which services are missing and where, and what it would take—in terms of providers, dollars, and facilities—to fill the gap.

2. Expand, update, and improve the Menu of Critical Health Services and involve public health, private providers, and purchasing

groups in using the Menu to guide decisions about health services.

The Menu of Critical Health Services can provide a systematic way for everyone involved in health care delivery to look at what they have and what they need to meet basic expectations of services. By working from a common list, gaps in services will be easier to identify and address. In some areas, such as environmental health protection, the list of services should be expanded.

3. Promote “exemplary practices” associated with the access standard for public health.

The standards baseline study yielded valuable examples of work that can help a community address health care access issues. The State Board of Health report on access makes many recommendations on actions that will improve access and benefit communities.